

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

This Amendment is responsive to the Office action dated April 7, 2006, setting forth a shortened three month statutory period for reply with two month extension expiring on September 7, 2006. This response is submitted on September 7, 2006; thus, a petition and fee for a two month extension of time accompany this Amendment.

The Examiner is thanked for his review of this application and issuance of the Office action. This amendment is fully responsive to the Office action and places the application in condition for allowance. Thus, entry of this amendment and issuance of a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-34 are pending in the application, with claims 1, 7, 11, 12, 29, and 34 being independent claims. By this Amendment, claims 3, 4, 6, 8, and 10 have been amended, and claims 1-2, 7, and 12-34 have been canceled without prejudice. Accordingly, the claims now pending in the application are claims 3-6 and 8-11, with claims 3 and 11 being independent claims.

I. Allowable Subject Matter

The Applicant thanks the Examiner for allowing claim 11 and for indicating claims 3 and 5 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form, including all of the limitations of their base claim and any intervening claims.

Amended claim 3 has been rewritten into independent form and incorporates all limitations of base claim 1 and intervening claim 2. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 3 is in a condition for allowance and indication of such is respectfully requested.

Claim 5 depends from amended claim 3. Since this claim depends directly from a patentably distinct independent claim, it is patentable. Accordingly, the Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner withdraw his objection and allow claim 5. The Applicant makes this statement without reference to or waiving the independent bases of patentability within claim 5.

II. Response to Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1, 2, 4, 7, 12, 21-23, 25, 27, and 29-34 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,669,865. Claims 12, 13, 16, 21, 29, 33, and 34 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,743,010 issued to Geraci (hereinafter, "Geraci").

To advance prosecution of this application and to expedite the issuance of allowed claims, claims 1, 2, 7, 12, 13, 16, 21-23, 25, 27, and 29-34 are cancelled without prejudice. In light of these cancellations, the rejections of claims 1, 2, 7, 12, 16, 21-23, 25, 27, and 29-34 are moot. The right to traverse these rejections in a continuation application or other related application is expressly reserved.

Amended claim 4 depends from independent claim 3. Since this claim depends directly from a patentably distinct independent claim, it is patentable. Accordingly, the Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner withdraw his rejection and allow claim 4. The Applicant makes this statement without reference to or waiving the independent bases of patentability within claim 4.

III. Response to Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1, 2, 8-10, 12, 13, and 15-34 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over German Patent No. 43 20 887 A1 issued to Keller (hereinafter, "Keller") in view of Geraci. Claim 6 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Keller in view of Geraci and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,580,340 issued to Yu (hereinafter "Yu"). Claim 14 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Geraci in view of Yu.

To advance prosecution of this application and to expedite the issuance of allowed claims, claims 1, 2, and 12-34 are cancelled without prejudice. In light of these cancellations, the rejections of claims 1, 2, and 12-34 are moot. The right to traverse these rejections in a continuation application or other related application is expressly reserved.

Claim 9 and amended claims 6, 8 and 10 all depend from independent claim 3. Since each of these dependent claims depend, directly or indirectly, from a patentably distinct independent claim, the dependent claims are themselves patentable. Accordingly, the Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner withdraw his rejections of these claims and allow them. The Applicant makes this statement without reference to or waiving the independent bases of patentability within these dependent claims.

IV. CONCLUSION

In view of the above, claims 3-6 and 8-11 remain in the application, with claims 3 and 11 being independent claims. In accordance with the amendments and arguments set forth herein,

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the application and all claims are believed to be in condition for allowance, and such prompt allowance is earnestly requested.

This Amendment is filed with a Petition for a Two-Month Extension of Time and a request to charge Deposit Account No. 04-1415 for the extension of time fees in the amount of \$450. The Applicant believes no further fees or petitions are due with this filing. However, should any such fees or petitions be required, please consider this as authorization therefor and please charge such fees to Deposit Account number 04-1415.

Should any issues remain that the Examiner believes may be dealt with in a telephone conference, he is invited to contact the undersigned at (303) 352-1118.

Respectfully submitted,

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